

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior version, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-34. (canceled)

35. (new) A method, comprising:

 sending a network use digital contract from a policy administrator to a network element, wherein the network use digital contract comprises a term to allow encrypted communications from the network element to be decrypted by an entity other than addressees of the encrypted communications;

 sending a network monitoring digital contract from the policy administrator to a network monitoring element, wherein the network monitoring digital contract comprises a term to allow the network monitoring element to monitor communications from the network element, even if the encrypted communications are not addressed to the network monitoring element; and

 sending decrypting information from the policy administrator to the network monitoring element in accordance with the network monitoring digital contract and the network use digital contract, the decrypting information to allow the network monitoring element to monitor a decrypted version of an encrypted communication from the network element.

36. (new) A method according to claim 35, where, before the policy administrator sends the decrypting information to the network monitoring element, the policy administrator performs operations comprising:

- receiving, at the policy administrator, a request from the network monitoring element for the decrypting information;

- sending, from the policy administrator, a request to the network monitoring element for the network monitoring digital contract;

- receiving, at the policy administrator, the network monitoring digital contract from the network monitoring element; and

- authenticating the received network monitoring digital contract.

37. (new) A method according to claim 35, wherein sending decrypting information to the network monitoring element comprises:

- sending a decryption key from the policy administrator to the network monitoring element, the decryption key to allow the network monitoring element to decrypt the encrypted communication.

38. (new) A method according to claim 35, wherein sending decrypting information to the network monitoring element comprises:

- the policy administrator decrypting the encrypted communication; and

- the policy administrator sending the decrypted communication to the network monitoring element.

39. (new) A method according to claim 35, wherein, before the policy administrator sends the network monitoring digital contract to the network monitoring element, the policy administrator performs operations comprising:

- receiving a digital certificate of the network monitoring element;
- authenticating the digital certificate of the network monitoring element;
- receiving a digital signature of the network monitoring element;
- authenticating the digital signature of the network monitoring element;
- writing contract terms in an electronic document;
- writing the digital certificate of the network monitoring element and the digital signature of the network monitoring element in the electronic document; and
- writing a digital certificate of the policy administrator and a digital signature of the policy administrator in the electronic document.

40. (new) A method according to claim 39, wherein writing contract terms in an electronic document comprises:

- writing data in the electronic document to identify a time period during which the network monitoring element will be allowed to monitor decrypted versions of encrypted communications from the network element.

41. (new) A method according to claim 35, wherein, before the policy administrator sends the network use digital contract to the network element, the policy administrator performs operations comprising:

- receiving a digital certificate of the network element;
- authenticating the digital certificate of the network element;
- receiving a digital signature of the network element;
- authenticating the digital signature of the network element;
- writing contract terms in an electronic document;
- writing the digital certificate of the network element and the digital signature of the network element in the electronic document; and
- writing a digital certificate of the policy administrator and a digital signature of the policy administrator in the electronic document.

42. (new) A method according to claim 35, wherein the term in the network use digital contract to allow encrypted communications from the network element to be decrypted by an entity other than addressees of the encrypted communications comprises:

data to indicate that the network element has agreed to allow encrypted communications from the network element to a second network element to be decrypted by an entity other than the second network element.

43. (new) A method, comprising:

receiving, at a network monitoring element, a network monitoring digital contract from a policy administrator, wherein the network monitoring digital contract comprises a term to allow the network monitoring element to monitor encrypted communications from a network element managed by the policy administrator, even if the encrypted communications are not addressed to the network monitoring element;

sending, from the network monitoring element to the policy administrator, a request to monitor the encrypted communications;

sending the network monitoring digital contract from the network monitoring element to the policy administrator; and

after sending the network monitoring digital contract to the policy administrator, receiving, at the network monitoring element, decrypting information from the policy administrator, the decrypting information to allow the network monitoring element to monitor decrypted versions of the encrypted communications from the network element.

44. (new) A method according to claim 43, wherein the operation of receiving decrypting information from the policy administrator comprises:

receiving, from the policy administrator, a decryption key to allow the network monitoring element to decrypt the encrypted communications from the network element.

45. (new) A method according to claim 43, wherein the operation of receiving decrypting information from the policy administrator comprises:

receiving, from the policy administrator, decrypted versions of the encrypted communications.

46. (new) A method according to claim 43, wherein, before the network monitoring element receives the network monitoring digital contract from the policy administrator, the network monitoring element performs at least one operation from the group consisting of:

sending a digital certificate for the network monitoring element to the policy administrator; and

sending a digital signature for the network monitoring element to the policy administrator.

47. (new) A method, comprising:

- receiving, at a network element, a network use digital contract from a policy administrator, wherein the network use digital contract comprises a term to indicate that the network element has agreed to allow encrypted communications from the network element to be decrypted by an entity other than addressees of the encrypted communications;

- sending an encrypted communication from the network element;

- writing, into a log, information to allow the encrypted communication to be decrypted, wherein the information is written into the log by the network element;
- and

- allowing the policy administrator to access the log to obtain the information to allow the encrypted communication to be decrypted.

48. (new) A method according to claim 47, wherein before the network element receives the network use digital contract from the policy administrator, the network element performs at least one operation from the group consisting of:

- sending a digital certificate for the network element to the policy administrator; and

- sending a digital signature for the network element to the policy administrator.

49. (new) An article, comprising:

a machine accessible medium; and

instructions in the machine accessible medium, wherein the instructions, when executed by a processing system, cause the processing system to provide a policy administrator that performs operations comprising:

sending a network use digital contract to a network element, wherein the network use digital contract comprises a term to allow encrypted communications from the network element to be decrypted by an entity other than addressees of the encrypted communications;

sending a network monitoring digital contract to a network monitoring element, wherein the network monitoring digital contract comprises a term to allow the network monitoring element to monitor communications from the network element, even if the encrypted communications are not addressed to the network monitoring element; and

sending decrypting information to the network monitoring element in accordance with the network monitoring digital contract and the network use digital contract, the decrypting information to allow the network monitoring element to monitor decrypted versions of the encrypted communications from the network element.

50. (new) An article, comprising:

a machine accessible medium; and

instructions in the machine accessible medium, wherein the instructions, when executed by a processing system, cause the processing system to provide a network monitoring element that performs operations comprising:

receiving a network monitoring digital contract from a policy administrator, wherein the network monitoring digital contract comprises a term to allow the network monitoring element to monitor communications from a network element managed by the policy administrator, even if the encrypted communications are not addressed to the network monitoring element;

sending, to the policy administrator, a request to monitor communications from the network element;

sending the network monitoring digital contract to the policy administrator; and

after sending the network monitoring digital contract to the policy administrator, receiving decrypting information from the policy administrator, the decrypting information to allow the network monitoring element to monitor decrypted versions of encrypted communications from the network element.

51. (new) An article, comprising:

a machine accessible medium; and

instructions in the machine accessible medium, wherein the instructions, when executed by a processing system, cause the processing system to provide a network element that performs operations comprising:

receiving a network use digital contract from a policy administrator, wherein the network use digital contract comprises a term to indicate that the network element has agreed to allow encrypted communications from the network element to be decrypted by an entity other than addressees of the encrypted communications;

sending an encrypted communication from the network element;

writing, into a log, information to allow the encrypted communication to be decrypted, wherein the information is written into the log by the network element; and

allowing the policy administrator to access the log to obtain the information to allow the encrypted communication to be decrypted.

52. (new) An apparatus comprising:

a processor;

a machine accessible medium in communication with the processor; and

instructions in the machine accessible medium, wherein the instructions, when executed by the processor, enable the apparatus to operate as a policy administrator that performs operations comprising:

sending a network use digital contract to a network element, wherein the network use digital contract comprises a term to allow encrypted communications from the network element to be decrypted by an entity other than addressees of the encrypted communications; and

sending a network monitoring digital contract to a network monitoring element, wherein the network monitoring digital contract comprises a term to allow the network monitoring element to monitor communications from the network element, even if the encrypted communications are not addressed to the network monitoring element;

sending decrypting information to the network monitoring element in accordance with the network monitoring digital contract and the network use digital contract, the decrypting information to allow the network monitoring element to monitor a decrypted version of an encrypted communication from the network element.

53. (new) An apparatus comprising:

- a processor;

- a machine accessible medium in communication with the processor; and
- instructions in the machine accessible medium, wherein the instructions, when executed by the processor, enable the apparatus to operate as a network element that performs operations comprising:

- receiving a network use digital contract from a policy administrator, wherein the network use digital contract comprises a term to indicate that the network element has agreed to allow encrypted communications from the network element to be decrypted by an entity other than addressees of the encrypted communications;

- sending an encrypted communication from the network element;

- writing, into a log, information to allow the encrypted communication to be decrypted, wherein the information is written into the log by the network element;
- and

- allowing the policy administrator to access the log to obtain the information to allow the encrypted communication to be decrypted.